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From the January 17, 2003 print edition **Biz Buzz**

Downtown Art Deco

Timothy Roberts

Tom Frank chose downtown San Jose over Santana Row for his latest P.F. Chang's China Bistro location because he liked the urban experience.

"We're going to feed into the entertainment environment downtown," he says.

Mr. Frank served up a P.F. Chang's lunch Jan. 13 for a slew of dignitaries in the shell of the space the restaurant will occupy in 10 to 12 months: 98 S. Second St.

P.F. Chang's will restore the building not to its original 1880s form but to its 1930s art deco remake, says architect Gordon Crespo of MBH Architects of Alameda.

Whatever the era, at least "it won't have the sterility of a new shopping center," he said. "You can't reproduce 100 years of history with two years of construction."

The construction at this site will be done by Barry Swenson.

Councilwoman Cindy Chavez thanked Mayor Ron Gonzales for his determination to bring establishments like P.F. Chang's to downtown.

"I once saw him chase a doughnut shop down the street," she said. Then after a surprised look from the chubby chief, she added: "Not literally. He wasn't chasing the doughnuts."

"Thanks for clarifying that," Mr. Gonzales said.

Life in the Neighborhoods

Ms. Chavez is on the move — from downtown to Naglee Park. The 6th District Councilwoman will still be in her own district, but she's moving to a neighborhood that is trying to back out of the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative, a program that Ms. Chavez backed on the City Council. The initiative diverts redevelopment funds from downtown projects to neighborhoods.

Fearful that the redevelopment money also would bring the San Jose Redevelopment Agency and its power of eminent domain to the neighborhood, neighbors voted to pull out of the initiative. The City Council may vote on the removal of

the neighborhood from the program. Ms. Chavez says she's not sure if she'll be able to vote on that issue because it could pose a conflict of interest. The issue never arose when she voted for the initiative, which also includes her downtown residence.

The move was prompted by the need for more space, now that she and her husband, Mike Potter, have a son, Brennan. They are renting out their North Sixth Street house to family. And Ms. Chavez says she would like to move back to that area at some point.

"I'm still committed to the core," she says.

Committee of none

The first act of Assemblywoman Rebecca Cohn, D-Saratoga, on being appointed chairwoman of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee was to fire its one remaining employee, Chuck Pattillo. Mr. Pattillo was in charge of the committee's investigation into the state's scandalous software contract (no bid; \$95 million) with Oracle Corp. The dismissal, first reported in The Sacramento Bee, raised questions about how much of a watchdog the audit committee will be.

But Cris Forsyth, Ms. Cohn's chief of staff, said the Assemblywoman is putting the committee staff together and will announce the new hires in a few days.

"This wasn't about who that person was," Mr. Forsyth said, although he added, "I understand the symbolism."

Redevelopment on appeal

The California Redevelopment Association has weighed in on Al Schlarmann's lawsuit against the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. Mr. Schlarmann wants to develop the Fountain Alley parking lot. He paid \$1.5 million for the development rights. But the redevelopment agency needs that site for the big development planned by CIM Group that would bring 509 apartments and condominiums, 120,000 square feet of shops and restaurants, and 845 underground parking spaces. The agency used its power of eminent domain to get the development rights back. Mr. Schlarmann, owner of San Jose Parking Co., sued, lost in Superior Court and is now taking his case to the state Court of Appeal.

Mr. Schlarmann argues that you can use powers of eminent domain only against actual real estate, not against contracts like the one he has.

The state redevelopment association says if the court comes down on Mr. Schlarmann's side it will "significantly hamper redevelopment agencies' ability to assemble property for redevelopment."

Just a nanosecond

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, has introduced legislation that would create the Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Advisory Board. The board would provide oversight of the National Nanotechnology Initiative. This raises an important question: Who serves on a nano board? Small-business owners?

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